

REMARKS

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.111, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the claim rejections set forth in the Office Action dated May 9, 2006.

Summary

Claims 6 - 9 are currently amended.

Claims 10 – 13 are cancelled.

Claims 21 – 30 are added.

Information Disclosure Statement

Enclosed is a supplemental information disclosure statement and corresponding form 1449. Applicant requests that the Examiner place the supplemental information disclosure statement in the application file and provide the Applicant with a record indicating that the statement was considered.

Drawings

The drawings were objected to pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a). Applicant respectfully submits that all the features recited in the claims are definite and shown in the drawings. However, claim 7 is currently amended to further clarify the claimed subject matter and expedite prosecution. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the drawing objection

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claim 7 was rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Amended claim 7 recites, *inter alia*, the housing has a positioning portion on an inner wall of the housing, the assembled body being insertable into the housing so as to position the assembled body with respect to the housing. Claim 7 particularly points out and distinctly claims the claimed subject matter. Accordingly, claim 7 is now in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 6 – 9 were rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Agetsuma (U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0066658) in view of Miyako et al. (U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0033321).

Claim 6 recites, *inter alia*, the support member has a space into which at least one spoke is inserted when the front-side casing member and the back-side casing member are mounted to the at least one spoke.

Agetsuma fails to disclose the support member has a space into which at least one spoke is inserted when the front-side casing member and the back-side casing member are mounted to the at least one spoke. Agetsuma discloses that “[t]he support member is fixedly secured to a rear surface of a pad of the steering wheel” (abstract; Figure 1 and 2). Accordingly, claim 1 is allowable over the cited reference.

Miyako et al. fail to disclose the support member has a space into which at least one spoke is inserted when the front-side casing member and the back-side casing member are mounted to the at least one spoke. Miyako et al. disclose a contrary arrangement. Miyako et al. teach a switch 3 inside an outer casing 4 (paragraph 28). The spoke 1c of the steering wheel 1 is not disposed in the outer casing 4, rather the spoke 1c is disposed in a concave portion 10 (paragraph 28). As taught by Miyako et al. and shown in Figure 3, the spoke 1c, which is completely covered, is mounted to the concave portion 10. The outer casing 4 is not mounted to the spoke 1c. Accordingly, claim 6 is allowable over the cited references.

Dependent claims 7 – 9 depend from allowable claim 6, so are allowable for at least this reason.

New Claims

Claims 21 – 30 are added. Support for each of the new claims can be found in the specification and drawings as originally filed. Accordingly, no new matter was added. Claims 21 – 30 depend from an allowable base claim, so are allowable for at least this reason. Further limitations of the dependent claims are allowable over the cited references.

The cited references fail to disclose the housing is formed on the back-side casing member as recited in claim 8.

The cited references fail to disclose the at least one spoke comprises an upper spoke and a lower spoke, as recited in claim 21. Agetsuma and Miyako et al. disclose a spoke that comprises a single spoke.

The cited references also fail to disclose a reinforcing portion as recited in Claim 22. More specifically, Agetsuma and Miyako et al. fail to disclose the reinforcing portion bridges between the front casing member and the back-side casing member so as to reinforce the support member. As shown in Figure 1 of Miyako et al., the mounting hooks 9a and the retaining portions 13 fail to bridge between the lower cover 12 and the outer casing 4. As disclosed by Miyakai et al., the mounting hooks 9 are “prevented by the retaining portions 13 from moving” (paragraph 23).

The cited references fail to disclose direct contact as recited by claim 23. In fact, Mikayi et al. teach a contrary arrangement. Mikayi et al. teach indirect contact between the lower cover 12 and the core metal 11.

The cited references fail to disclose several of the arrangement limitations recited in claim 24.

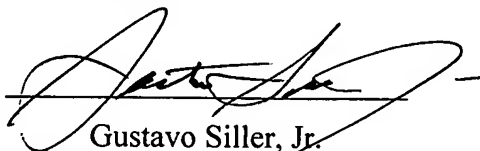
The cited references fail to disclose the snap joining portions as recited in claims 26 – 30.

Conclusion

For at least the reasons presented above, the Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned in the event that a telephone interview would expedite consideration of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gustavo Siller, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

Gustavo Siller, Jr.
Registration No. 32,305
Attorney for Applicant

BRINKS HOFER GILSON & LIONE
P.O. BOX 10395
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610
(312) 321-4200